



CITY OF SAN JOSÉ, CALIFORNIA

Building Division Informational Handout

Handout No. 6-5

Published:

8/21/00

Revised 10/15/07

Page 1 of 4

Sewer Installations and Septic Tank Abatements

This Handout contains information regarding:

1. Sewer repair requirements,
2. Property line cleanouts, and
3. Septic tank abatement procedures

1. Information Regarding Sewer Repairs

Permit Requirements

- A plumbing permit is required when repairing or replacing the ***building drain*** system and/or the ***building sewer***.
- The ***building drain*** is the drainage piping **inside** the building.
- The ***building sewer*** is the drainage piping, which starts two feet **outside** the building & connects the building drain to the City sewer.
- A permit may be issued to either the property owner, a State-licensed contractor, or to an authorized agent of the contractor (employee).
- Permits are obtained at the Building Division Permit Center.
- The Permit Center is located at 200 E. Santa Clara St. San Jose.
- Office hours are 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.
- The Permit fee is based on one inspection.

Note: If more than one inspection is necessary, additional fees will be required.

Installation Requirements

- Acceptable **drainage piping materials** are cast iron, galvanized steel, galvanized wrought iron, lead, copper, brass, extra strength vitrified clay pipe, Schedule 40 ABS DWV, Schedule 40 PVC DWV, or other approved materials, **except** that:
- No galvanized wrought iron or galvanized steel pipe shall be used underground and shall be kept at least six inches above ground.
- **ABS and PVC DWV piping installations are limited to residential construction not more than two stories in height.**
- No vitrified clay pipe or fittings shall be used above ground, inside a building, or where pressurized by a pump or ejector.
- Copper tube for above ground and underground drainage and vent piping shall have a weight of not less than that of copper drainage tube type DWV.

- **Drainage fittings** shall be of cast iron, malleable iron, lead, brass, copper, ABS, PVC, vitrified clay, or other approved materials. They shall have a smooth interior waterway of the same diameter as the piping served and all such fittings shall be compatible with the type of pipe used.
- All changes of direction of piping shall conform to Uniform Plumbing Code, Section 706.
- Building sewers shall be kept at least 12 inches below ground.
- When joining different types of piping together, use approved ***transition couplings***. A common inspection turndown is use of non-approved transition couplings.
 - Transition couplings shall be *listed* and labeled.
 - Labels shall be readily visible after installation.
 - Labels shall indicate the piping materials approved to be joined.
- When a building sewer is replaced, a **property line cleanout** must be installed.
- Prior to backfill, the replaced sewer line and cleanout shall remain accessible for inspection.

2. **Information Regarding Property Line Cleanouts** -

Property line cleanouts are beneficial to property owners. If there is a stoppage in the sewer line at the connection to the city sewer, a property line cleanout enables access to the stoppage. Furthermore, when a property line cleanout is installed, the City of San Jose will clear stoppages between the property line cleanout and the city sewer free of charge. This service is provided at no cost to property owners but is subject to the terms and conditions of the Department of Transportation. To contact the Department of Transportation go to [DOT](#) or call (408)277-4373.

Note: The installation and maintenance of property line cleanouts is the responsibility of the property owner.

Property line cleanouts are required in the following two conditions:

1. A private waste disposal system, such as a septic tank or cesspool is abandoned and the on-site sewer is connected to the city sanitary sewer.
2. When the existing *building sewer* is replaced or repaired at the property line.

Installation & Inspection Requirements

- A Plumbing Permit is required to install a property line cleanout.
- The property line cleanout must be installed on-site and within 5 feet of the property line (suggestion: just back of the sidewalk at property line).
- The cleanout must be accessible through an approved concrete cleanout box.
- A handout for cleanout installations is available at the Permit Center.
- The sewer line and cleanout shall remain accessible for inspection.
- When joining different types of piping together, use approved *transition couplings*.

3. Information Regarding Septic Tank Abatements

Public Works Requirements

- A **clearance from the Public Works Department** is required prior to issuing a plumbing permit for abandonment of a Private Sewage Disposal System. Their phone number is (408) 535-3555. After you have a clearance from them you need to get a Plumbing permit from the Building Division. You can do both of these at the Development Services Center at City Hall.

Plan Review and Permits Required

- Both Building and Plumbing permits are usually required to abandon a private sewage disposal system and hook up to the City sewer.
- A **plot plan** must be provided that details the location, size and depth of the septic tank. A **Building Plan Review** fee will be assessed to review the plot plan, based on a per hour rate with a half-hour minimum.
- A State licensed engineer must produce a demolition, drainage and compaction plan prior to permit issuance or the area of back-fill will be considered a "**non-build**" area in the future. If the excavation backfill is to be supervised, the special inspection final inspection letter, certifying that the excavation was compacted to 95% will be accepted as the final inspection. A Building permit is required to document removal and to review compaction documentation. If the area is to be declared a "**non-build**" area, a Building Division Inspector will visit the site and check that the excavation has been filled and that the location agrees with the supplied plot plan. A minimum fee Building Permit is issued to cover this inspection and a copy of the plot plan is kept in the City record for future reference. Plumbing inspections will still be required, as noted below.
- As a minimum, every cesspool, septic tank or seepage pit shall have the waste removed (pumped) and shall be completely filled with compatible material, such as sand or pea gravel as a condition of abandonment.
Note: Improper fill could create undesirable settlement.
- Prior to hooking up to the City sewer, a general **Health & Safety Survey** will be performed by the Building Division Inspector which will include a general inspection of the plumbing vents and traps,
- The applicant may have to obtain an additional **Plumbing Permit** from the Building Division after the survey is done, if corrections are determined necessary from the survey.
- After the sewer piping is installed and connected to the city sewer, the work shall remain open and accessible until after inspection.
- Local codes require a **property line cleanout** to be installed when the building sewer is replaced or when a new connection is made to the City sewer.

- When a **new lateral connection** is required to the city sewer -
 1. The Public Works Inspector will inspect the off-site sewer lateral, and
 2. The Building Division Inspector will inspect the on-site sewer piping located on the private property side.
- When there is an **existing lateral** to the city sewer -
 1. Only the Building Division Inspector will inspect the sewer installation.